

Claims

- [c1] A method for building an as-needed computer generated model, comprising the steps of:
- storing a max-case model file relating to a max-case design model, wherein said max-case design model includes plurality of model sub-components;
- extracting viewer-readable files for each of said plurality of model sub-components;
- generating a max-case design script including retrieval information for each of said plurality of model sub-components;
- receiving a user selection of particular as-needed model sub-components;
- generating an as-needed design script including retrieval information for each of the as-needed model sub-components;
- retrieving, in a model viewing application, the viewer-readable files for each of the as-needed model sub-components;
- building the as-needed model from the retrieved viewer-readable files; and
- displaying the as-needed model to the user.
- [c2] The method of claim 1, wherein the step of generating a max-case design script further comprises the step of extracting location information for each of the model sub-components.
- [c3] The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of storing said viewer-readable files in at least one computer-readable medium.
- [c4] The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of storing said user selection of particular as-needed model sub-components in at least one computer-readable medium.
- [c5] The method of claim 1, wherein at least the step of: extracting viewer-readable files for each of said plurality of model sub-components; receiving a user selection of particular as-needed model sub-components; and displaying the as-needed model to the user are completed at remote locations to each other.

- [c6] The method of claim 5 , wherein the remote locations are connected by a computer network.
- [c7] The method of claim 1 , further comprising the step of storing said viewer-readable files a VRML file format.
- [c8] The method of claim 1 , further comprising the step of storing said viewer-readable files in a TIFF file format.
- [c9] The method of claim 1 , further comprising the step of storing said max-case design script and said as-needed design script in an ASCII file format.
- [c10] The method of claim 1 , further comprising the steps of:
extracting spatial orientation information related to the three dimensional orientation of each of the model sub-components and including the spatial orientation information in the max-case design script;
receiving, from the user, sub-component placement and orientation information for each as-needed model sub-component; and
including within the as-needed design script, the received sub-component placement and orientation information.
- [c11] The method of claim 10 , wherein said spatial orientation information includes six degrees of freedom.
- [c12] The method of claim 10 , wherein said spatial orientation information includes coordinates for an angle of rotation about each of the x, y, and z axes, relative to a pre-established coordinate axes, and an offset in each of the x, y, and z directions relative to a predetermined model center point.
- [c13] A method for building and displaying an as-needed computer generated model, comprising the steps of:
receiving a selection of a plurality of model sub-components that, when assembled together, form the as-needed computer generated model;
executing an as-needed script readable by a model viewing software application and related to the selected plurality of model sub-components,

wherein the as-needed script includes retrieval information for each of the plurality of model sub-components;
retrieving, based upon said as-needed script, a plurality of viewer-readable files corresponding to the selected plurality of model sub-components;
building the as-needed computer generated model from the plurality of retrieved viewer-readable files in a model viewing software application; and
displaying the as-needed computer generated model in the model viewing software application.

[c14] A system for building an as-needed computer generated model, comprising:
a multi-dimensional modeling tool for generating and storing a max-case model file relating to a max-case design model, wherein said max-case design model includes plurality of model sub-components;
a sub-component extraction utility electronically connected to said multi-dimensional modeling tool for extracting viewer-readable files for each of said plurality of model sub-components;
a viewer utility electronically connected to said sub-component extraction utility for generating a max-case design script that includes at least retrieval information for each of said plurality of model sub-components;
a product configurator application electronically connected to said viewer utility for receiving a user selection of particular as-needed model sub-components; and
a viewer application electronically connected to said product configurator application and said sub-component extraction utility for generating an as-needed design script including retrieval information for each of the as-needed model sub-components, retrieving, the viewer-readable files for each of the as-needed model sub-components, building the as-needed model from the retrieved viewer-readable files; and displaying the as-needed model to the user.

[c15] The system of claim 14 wherein said viewer utility extracts location information for each of the model sub-components.

- [c16] The system of claim 14 , wherein said sub-component extraction utility stores said viewer-readable files in at least one computer-readable medium.
- [c17] The system of claim 14 , wherein said product configurator application stores said user selection of particular as-needed model sub-components in at least one computer-readable medium.
- [c18] The system of claim 14 , wherein at least said multi-dimensional modeling tool, said sub-component extraction utility, said product configurator application, and said viewer application are located at remote locations to each other.
- [c19] The system of claim 18 , wherein the remote locations are connected by a computer network.
- [c20] The system of claim 14 , wherein said viewer-readable files are stored in a VRML file format.
- [c21] The system of claim 14 , wherein said viewer-readable files are stored in a TIFF file format.
- [c22] The system of claim 14 , wherein said max-case design script and said as-needed design script are stored in an ASCII file format.
- [c23] The system of claim 14 , wherein:
said sub-component extraction utility further extracts spatial orientation information related to the three dimensional orientation of each of the model sub-components;
said viewer utility further includes the spatial orientation information in the max-case design script;
said product configurator application further receives, from the user, sub-component placement and orientation information for each as-needed model sub-component; and
said viewer application further includes, within the as-needed design script, the received sub-component placement and orientation information.

[c24] The system of claim 23 , wherein said spatial orientation information includes six degrees of freedom.

[c25] The system of claim 23 , wherein said spatial orientation information includes coordinates for an angle of rotation about each of the x, y, and z axes, relative to a pre-established coordinate axes, and an offset in each of the x, y, and z directions relative to a predetermined model center point.

[c26] A system for building and displaying an as-needed computer generated model, comprising:
a product configurator application for receiving a selection of a plurality of model sub-components that, when assembled together, form the as-needed computer generated model;
a viewer application for executing an as-needed script related to the selected plurality of model sub-components,
wherein the as-needed script includes retrieval information for each of the plurality of model sub-components;
said viewer application further retrieving, based upon said as-needed script, a plurality of viewer-readable files corresponding to the selected plurality of model sub-components;
said viewer application further building the as-needed computer generated model from the plurality of retrieved viewer-readable files in a model viewing software application; and
said viewer application further displaying the as-needed computer generated model in the model viewing software application.